

# Prevention And Wellness

## SCDDSN PREVENTION AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2008 Prevention and Wellness newsletter developed by South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs Prevention and Wellness Committee. The mission of SCDDSN includes assistance to “minimize the occurrence and reduce the severity of disabilities through prevention”.

### A Focus on Seniors at Florence County DSNB

The Florence County DSNB has put an emphasis on providing inclusive recreational opportunities for people aged 65 and older who are no longer working. Funded by a South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council grant, Florence County DSNB has developed several recreational options that have been well-received by senior participants.

Recognizing the value and rehabilitative aspects of gardening, the seniors were assisted with designing a garden with a variety of vegetables. The seniors have enjoyed planting and tending to the plants and are now preparing to gather their produce. This form of activity allows the seniors to be physically active and reduce stress levels. There is also socialization as a result of being involved in a group activity. Improved flexibility is another a byproduct of gardening.

According to the Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA) website, “the opportunity to participate in recreational opportunities like gardening is fundamental to the personal growth and development of all individuals. By nurturing and caring for plants and flowers, people feel needed, develop skills, build self-confidence, learn, and grow”. Barbara Raynor, co-founder and member of DIGA states, “Gardening is a focus outside one’s self. The bottom line is, if you are worrying about a plant and what it needs for its wellbeing, you forget your

[disability]. The more you garden, the further this develops”.

Another opportunity that seniors may engage in is Wii Fit games designed for physical activity. A large screen TV was purchased for use with this activity. Exercise in the form of virtual bowling, baseball, and tennis will be offered. There are also Wii Fit games that focus on balance. The seniors are excited and look forward to getting started with these games.

Other recreational opportunities include horseshoes, darts, table games, and dancing. The seniors enjoy dancing and it is a fun way to be physically active. The seniors also plan picnics in the park and enjoy walking on nature trails.



*Planting a Garden*

The Florence County DSNB is focused on health and wellness. Daily curriculums involve movement and learning through motion. The seniors benefit from varied recreational opportunities that keep them physically active throughout the day. **For more information about these activities, please contact Dawn Johnson, Executive Director, at (843) 667-5007 or [djohnson@fcdsn.org](mailto:djohnson@fcdsn.org).**

### Injury Prevention Projects– Head and Spinal Cord Injury Division

SCDDSN is committed to preventing lifelong injuries in our state. This year, the department announced funding for projects that will increase evidence-based *ThinkFirst* injury prevention efforts. Six (6) awards in the amount of \$2500 were issued in July. Details concerning these projects will be shared in future newsletters.

The *ThinkFirst* National Injury Prevention Foundation, formally known as the National Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program, was first implemented nationally in 1986. *ThinkFirst* programs are aimed at helping children, youth, and teens learn about personal vulnerability and the importance of making safe choices. *ThinkFirst* curricula and supplementary materials are research-validated and have received national recognition. Another effective component of the program is the use of *Voices for Injury Prevention* (VIP) speakers. VIP’s are people living with brain or spinal cord injury who openly tell their personal story and the effects of their injury.

Currently in South Carolina, only four (4) *ThinkFirst* chapters have been established. Through use of this funding, the SCDDSN Prevention and Wellness Committee desires to establish more injury prevention efforts, especially in unrepresented areas in the state.

## Health and Wellness– SCDDSN Provider Coalition

The SCDDSN Prevention and Wellness Committee recently assembled a large coalition of agency personnel from local SCDDSN boards and private providers representing a large portion of the state. The primary purpose for assembling this coalition is to encourage, advance, and guide local efforts to promote healthy lifestyles for people by focusing on nutrition, weight management, and physical activity.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works closely with states to improve health and safety in the United States. Healthy People 2010 is a national plan that guides federal, state, local, and private efforts to promote wellness in the country's population. CDC recognized that people with disabilities have disparities in health status when compared to the general population.

It is documented that people with disabilities experience higher rates of emergency room visits and hospital stays, higher rates of secondary debilitating conditions that may be prevented (e.g. obesity, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, diabetes, tooth loss, respiratory problems, heart/vascular disease, etc.), lower access to preventative health care, lower rates of formal health education, lower rates of physical activity, and higher rates of social isolation and depression.

Historically, the health and wellness of people with disabilities has been a neglected area of interest to researchers, health care providers, and policy makers. Although the disability and health field has emerged within the last decade, resources to implement higher-quality health promotion and strategies to prevent secondary conditions are lacking in most states.

The Prevention and Wellness Committee recently received grant funding from the South Carolina Eat Smart Move More Coalition. This funding will be used to offer the SCDDSN provider network several wellness promotion seminars and resources.

State or national level experts will provide information in topics such as nutrition, menu planning, setting health goals, promoting physical activity, stress management, behavior modification, and motivational strategies for improving health and preventing or minimizing secondary conditions in people with cognitive disabilities. Planning is underway for the coalition to meet this summer or fall for formal orientation and networking.

## The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability

The mission of the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD) is to promote substantial health benefits that can be gained from participating in regular physical activity. Its mission was created from the consensus that physical activity is a key to optimal health, that *inactivity* is a serious health concern for people with disabilities, and that people with disabilities are at greater risk than the general population for developing secondary health conditions due to sedentary lifestyles.

The slogan of NCPAD, a federally funded center through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is ***Exercise is for EVERY body***, and every person can gain some health benefit from being more physically active. NCPAD is a **resource and information center** providing a variety of resources on physical activity, disability and health conditions, wellness, and health promotion for consumers with disabilities, their fitness and other with disabilities, their family and other health professionals, as well as researchers, educators and many others. It is also a **health promotion center** encouraging and supporting healthy lifestyles for

people with disabilities or health conditions as well as a **research and training center** promoting further research on the benefits of physical activity and guiding best practice in the field. Some of the resources obtainable through NCPAD are fact sheets, monthly newsletters, video clips, searchable databases, calendar of events highlighting conferences and meetings, job openings, virtual tour of an accessible fitness facility, before and after fitness center make-over, a web shop where pedometers, NCPAD exercise videos, and other products can be purchased, free materials, and personalized attention from highly trained information specialists. For more information, contact:



[www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)  
1-800-900-8086



SCDDSN would like providers to give input for future topics on prevention efforts and/or share what they are doing to promote healthy lifestyles for those they support.

Please email [trhodes@ddsn.sc.gov](mailto:trhodes@ddsn.sc.gov) or call (803) 898-9422.